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Jovanovich's education attraction will put America on the map

Coming soon — a coast-to-coast walk in Central Florida. What will they think of next? Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, the textbook publishers and owners of Sea World and Cypress Gardens, will open a free attraction called Places of Learning on Oct. 15. You may remember the site as the ill-fated Stars Hall of Fame wax museum, but you're not likely to recognize it when HBJ completes its revisions.

For starters, outside there will be a one-acre scale map of the United States, with representations of mountains, rivers and 400 cities and towns. "The Gulf of Mexico is actually a pond, and Niagara Falls works," said Roland Goddu, HBJ director of educational research and development, who is in charge of the project. You will be able to see the country at your own speed, or take a guided tour.

Inside the old waxworks, visitors will find a 7,500-square-foot retail store that HBJ is billing as the world's largest children's store. It will feature more than 4,000 titles of children's books representing many publishers, as well as educational software, computer books and a demonstration classroom. The classroom will open next spring as a showcase for the newest teaching innovations.

"We think learning is something important, and it's a way to show some of the things we work on," Goddu said. "We sort of have the notion that not very many people know what a publisher does."

Places of Learning is located on Academic Drive, off Interstate 4 near Sea World.

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Dog days at Cypress Gardens. Sparky the diving dalmatian will join the cast of Aquacade '85 Saturday, when it resumes with a roster of high-diving daredevils. Showtimes will be 11 a.m., 1 and 3 p.m. daily. Cypress Gardens hours are 8 a.m. to dusk; admission is $11.95 for adults, $7.50 for children. The gardens are located on State Road 540 near Winter Haven.

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Float boats. Almost everything that's seaworthy will be on display Thursday through next Sunday at Central Florida's only in-the-water boat show at the Walt Disney World Village Boat Show, Lake Buena Vista lagoon. More than 150 1986 models of all shapes, sizes and speeds will be on display from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Admission is free. Take the Walt Disney World Village exit from Interstate 4.

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Want to record your Central Florida stay? Too cheap to buy a video camera? Vacation Memories, a new firm in southwest Orlando, rents video cameras ($49 per day) for those who prefer seeing themselves greet Goofy and shake Shamu's tongue to watching MTV. The firm's office is at 4401 Vineland Road, Suite A-10, (305) 425-2007.

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Night Magic held over. Sea World's summertime A Little Night Magic show — a nighttime killer-whale show followed by a musical revue and fireworks — will continue on Saturday nights, beginning at 8 p.m., through Nov. 30.

The park will remain open Saturdays until 10:30 p.m., and, after 5 p.m., admission is reduced to $12.95 for adults, $9.95 for children. Regular admission is $14.95 for adults, $11.95 for children. Hours Sundays through Fridays are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. □

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